Subject-verb agreement



One of these cheeses is mild; the others are strong.

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Construction

Singular noun + singular verb

My son is 12 years old.
This box of chocolates is expensive.

Plural noun + plural verb

My colleagues are very nice.
The people in the IT team are very helpful.

Nouns that can be singular or plural

For a group or organisation, we can use a singular or plural verb:<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

The IT team is/ are based in Lyon.

The government want/wants to increase taxes.

Other examples include: audience, class, company, crowd, department, family, population, school and the names of companies or organisations such as the BBC, Apple, the Stock Exchange and the World Health Organisation.

Nouns ending in 's'

The choice of verb depends on the noun. Here are some examples: <?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

	Singular verb	Plural verb
A single entity	**Jaws is my favourite film.** **The United States aims to promote democracy.**	
Nouns that appear to be plural but are not	**The news wasn't good.** **Physics includes the study of heat and light. [see below]**	
Some names of academic subjects have another, more general meaning	**Politics seems to be more popular now.** **Economics isn't my favourite subject.**	**His politics are changing. [political beliefs]** **The economics of this industry are interesting. [its financial system]**
Some have no singular form and always take a plural verb		**His clothes are unfashionable.** **Other examples include:** · **shorts** · **trousers** · **goods** · **premises**

Measurements, amounts and quantities

<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />	Singular verb	Plural verb

A singular verb is preferred	**Â€200 isn't enough.** **I think 75km is too far to travel.**	
With percentages, it depends whether the noun in the sentence is singular or plural	**40% of his time is spent in meetings.**	**10% of the employees want to work in a different department.**

More than one subject

We usually use a plural verb: <?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />

My sister and I are going to Italy next year.

But if we see the items as a single entity, we use a singular verb:

Blackcurrant crumble and ice cream is my favourite dessert.

Health and Safety has to be a priority.

'One of'

'One of' is followed by a plural noun but does not take a plural verb because it refers to 'one of a pair or group':

One of my colleagues is sick. ✔
One of my colleagues are sick. ✖

See also Quantifiers and plural nouns.

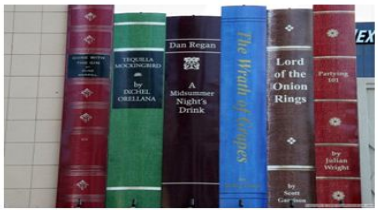
Examples



The goods are loaded onto ships.



My family like/likes going to the park.



"Angels and Demons" is Dan Brown's second novel.



Two hours wasn't long enough.



Moules frites is a popular French dish.



These trousers are perfect for the party!

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Last update: **2023/02/14 14:21**